

Technical Attachment

You Make The Call: Science Sharing Taken to a New Level

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With the advent of the National Weather Service (NWS) Southern Region (SR) Intranet, offices from across the southern-tier states have the ability to access a centrally located server to share important data such as office back-up procedures, local office policies, region-wide policies, phone numbers, office calendars, local spotter information, and forecast best practices. One particularly noteworthy item is the “You Make The Call” section of the SR Intranet.

This Intranet section <http://intranet.srh.noaa.gov/ymtc/ymtc.html> is modeled after the “You Make the Call” advertisements aired during televised football games in the 1980s. These spots made the viewer a part of the game utilizing game replays and time freezes to invite the viewer to “make the call” concerning whether a rule may have been violated. Through the SR Intranet version NWS personnel can learn useful tidbits of information regarding many different facets of the workplace, including meteorology, leadership, administrative support, data acquisition, and electronics. The meteorology section of You Make The Call contains mini-Weather Event Simulator cases, where readers are challenged to quickly “Make the Call” in a meteorological event, given only a few bits of information. This techniques makes training fun and readily accessible, while teaching practical applications of the science.

Another important aspect of the You Make The Call meteorology section is that this medium permits NWS forecasters to exchange scientific knowledge using graphics, detailed discussions, and focused explanations. An online chat room is also available that allows participants to discuss their approaches and theories, answer questions and raise objections to each mini-WES case. By allowing participants this opportunity to interact, science-sharing is taken to a new level. No longer is Web-based, distance learning one-sided. In meteorology, many different answers are sometimes possible. The author of a case may have one opinion as to the correct course of action, whereas a participant may see it differently. The opportunity for further explanation in the chat rooms offers participants a well-rounded training experience, whether it involves the case author, SOO, MIC, WCM, or a fellow forecaster/HMT/intern.

Science sharing is an important part of the job in the NWS. While travel budgets are shrinking, the need for improved collaboration and training continues to increase. The more we discover, the more our need-to-know grows. We owe it to the organization to share knowledge gained if we are to benefit from each other’s experiences.

To post cases to the You Make The Call Intranet site, contact Jeffrey Cupo (SOO, WFO Midland/Odessa) for details.